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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

EKALAKA AIRPORT
CARTER COUNTY, MONTANA

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

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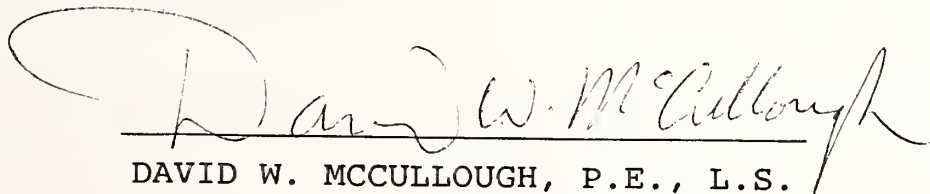
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JUNE, 1989

Prepared By:

HKM ASSOCIATES
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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

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CHAPTER I

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SECTION 1.1 - DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

SECTION 1.2 - PURPOSE

SECTION 1.3 - PROJECT NEED

SECTION 1.4 - REQUESTED FEDERAL ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION
TIME FRAME

SECTION 1.5 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION



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CHAPTER 1

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

Carter County is badly in need of an adequate airport capable of handling Design Group 1 aircraft (wing span not exceeding 49 feet) with approach speeds of less than 120 knots. The relatively isolated location of Ekalaka and Carter County is shown on Figure 1. State Highway Route 7 running south from Baker, Montana, deadends at Ekalaka. A major portion of Carter County lays south of Ekalaka. It is a large area containing ranches which have very limited road access to Ekalaka, their County Seat. Many ranchers have small aircraft with which they fly from their ranch to Ekalaka for their necessary County business.

During many winters all roads leading out of Ekalaka are blocked by snow drifts for more than a week at a time. At all times but especially during winter road conditions there is a potential need to fly people out to medical facilities on an emergency basis. Because of the inadequate length of the existing Ekalaka Airport's runway, and its unpaved surfaces,

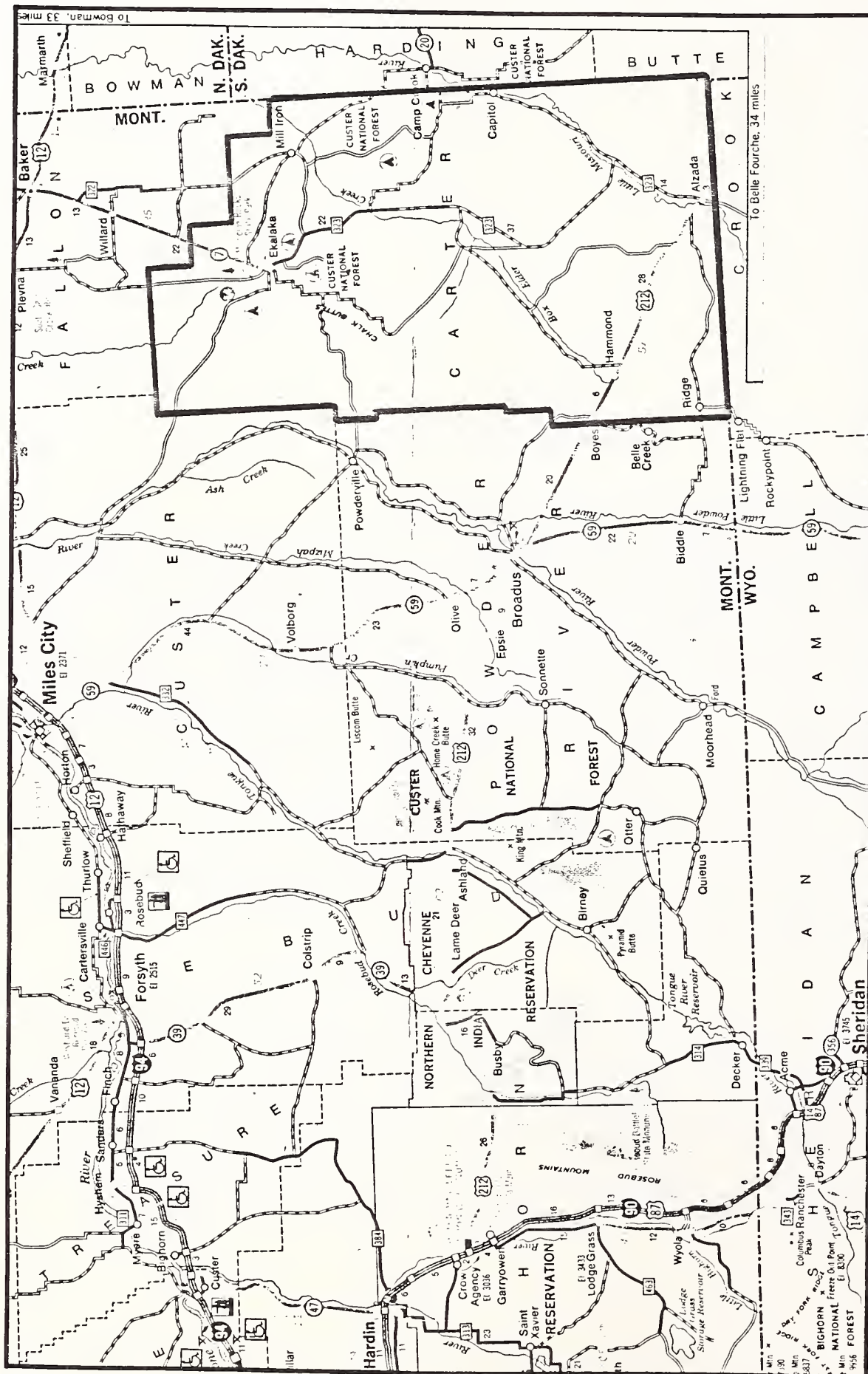


FIGURE 1

LOCATION MAP AND SERVICE AREA

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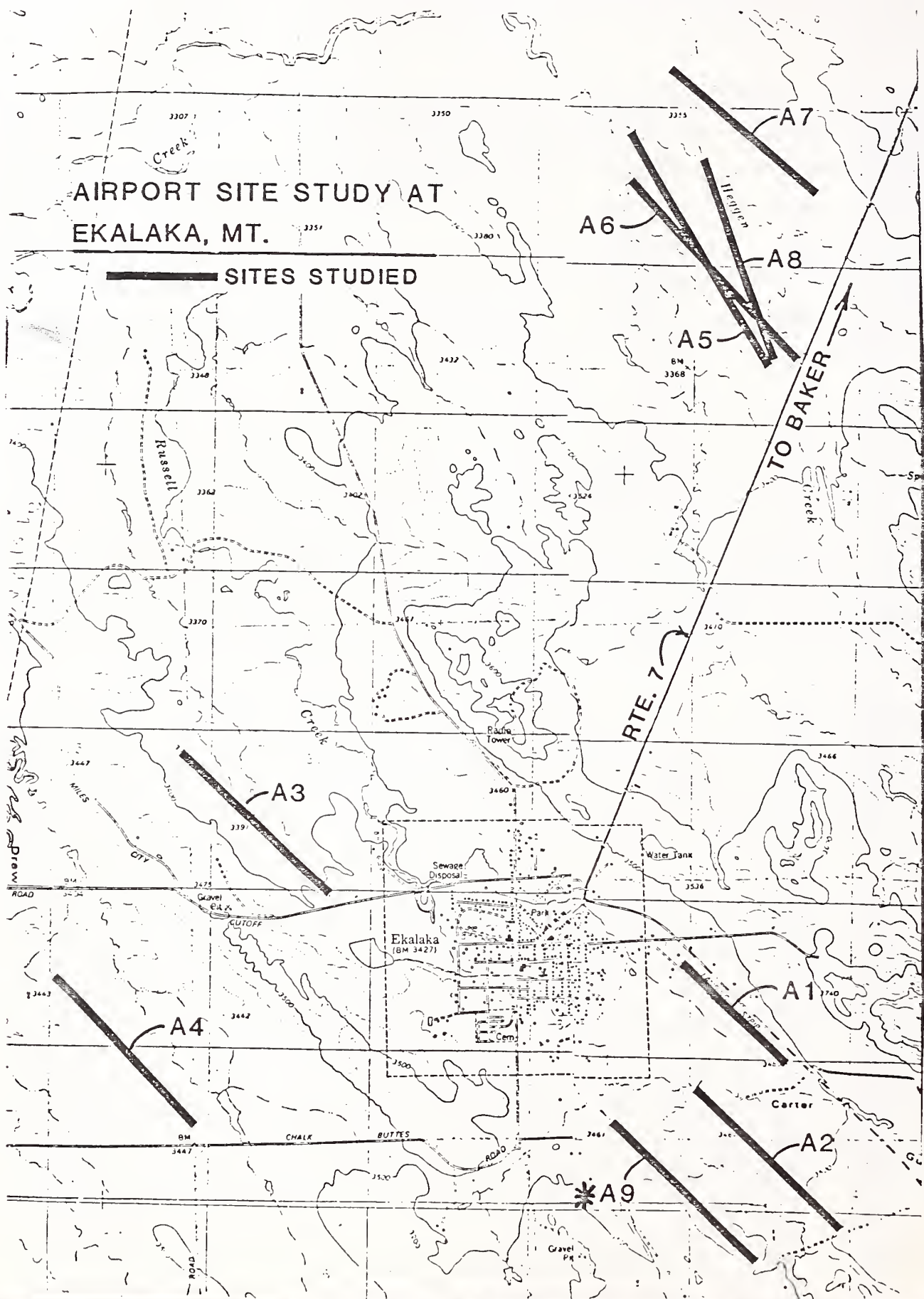
ambulance planes will not charter into this airport.

In 1977 HKM Associates was selected by Carter County as engineers for a Federal [FAA] Aid Airport project. It was the intent of the County to purchase land and extend the existing runway on the present airport site. FAA and the Montana Aeronautics Commission concurred in this plan at that time. This airport was built in 1964 as a joint project of the County and the Montana Aeronautics Commission. No federal dollars were used on it at that time.

The existing airport site has some serious terrain protrusions above the horizontal surface which violate FAA airspace criteria. In late 1977 an out-of-state pilot flew his plane into one of the hills adjacent to the airport. While there were no serious injuries, this action stopped all planning for Federally funded expansion on the existing airport site. A search for a suitable new site was then begun.

Eight (8) new sites numbered A2 through A9 were selected and studied in various detail. This study indicated an airport acceptable for FAA funding participation could be developed on new sites A3, A8 and A9.

On the attached Figure 2 these three sites, A1, the existing airport site and the other five (5) sites which were screened out early in the site selection study are shown. Through a screening process, and according to twelve (12) criteria items, Site A9 was selected as the airport site for development. For more information on this selection refer to "Airport Site Selection Study for Ekalaka, Carter County, MT," by HKM Associates dated December 1988.



ALTERNATE SITE LOCATION LAYOUT

* Site A9 is the selected site

FIGURE 2

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This is the site which is the subject of this Environmental Assessment. While the proximity of this site to the Town of Ekalaka does not make it as environmentally acceptable as some of the other sites further away from Town, this is the only site where it is indicated the County will be able to obtain the land on an amicable basis. Through actual experience and on the basis of the Airport Board's judgement, no other site can be obtained without the need to condemn the land for the new airport.

At the least, Basic Utility I with a required length of 3700 feet is the minimum that FAA can approve for their participation. However the County has judged that their need for air ambulance service, and for other considerations, that the initial project should involve acquisition of land and construction planning for Basic Utility II at 4800 feet. The proposed improvements will involve runway pavement of 4800 feet x 60 feet width. Also included are taxiway turn-arounds at the ends to allow aircraft to clear the runway for other planes needing to land and for turn-around purposes. The project will include medium intensity runway lighting, PAPI on one runway, and upgrading of the existing aircraft beacon, access road construction, new fencing to completely enclose the new airport, and the incidental drainage involved with the construction of this new airport.

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Federal action being requested is to provide a safe airport for Ekalaka, and Northern Carter County, Montana. It will provide for the efficient and safe operations for airport users, especially the accommodation of ambulance planes flying into Ekalaka on an emergency basis from Billings, MT, Rapid City, SD, and from Salt Lake City, UT for burn patients. Additionally, the airport improvements

TABLE 1.1
AIRPORT ACTIVITY PROJECTIONS

	<u>1987</u>	<u>2005</u>
<u>AIRCRAFT</u>		
a. Based	6	7
<u>ANNUAL OPERATIONS</u>		
a. Local	1452	1742
b. Itinerant	1098	1318
c. Total	2550	3060

*Source: Montana State Aviation System Plan, February 1989.

will make it possible to accommodate business aircraft desiring to fly into Ekalaka. At the present time, because of the danger to aircraft propellers, these aircraft, even if they could land on the relatively short 3,000 foot strip, will not do so because of the gravel surface and the consequent danger of rock damage to propellers.

1.3 PROJECT NEED

As has been stated, probably the paramount public reason for constructing the airport to a modern standard is to handle ambulance aircraft on an emergency basis. Because of the severe limitations on the type of aircraft that can and will fly into the present airport there will be a significant increase in aircraft activity with the construction of the proposed new facilities.

Ekalaka is unique in that there are relatively few based aircraft on the field. The State Aeronautical plan indicates there are six (6) based aircraft at the present time. However, this figure is quite misleading. In past years, Carter County has been noted as having the highest number of aircraft per capita of any county in the state. Because of the isolated nature of the ranches in Carter County due to the inadequate road system, many ranchers have airstrips at the ranch. They use these aircraft to commute to Ekalaka for shopping and county business. Refer to the following Table 1.1 "Projection of Airport Activities" for an estimate of aircraft operations which may occur at Ekalaka.

1.4 REQUESTED FEDERAL ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

The relevant development scheme envisioned for Ekalaka Airport can be developed in phases and time spans. They are respectively.

Phase I. The construction of the initial 4800 foot runway and the associated lighting, drainage, fencing and other support facilities. Initial runway pavement widths will be 60 feet in this initial phase.

Phase II. Development phases commonly used for planning purposes on all Federal Aid Airport projects involve an intermediate phase.

This intermediate phase could be thought of as extending from 1995 to 2005. For Ekalaka no improvements are anticipated in this intermediate phase.

Phase III. In Phase III, the long range view, which could be thought of as extending beyond the year 2005, the runway could be widened to 75 feet as the aircraft needs justify this increase in width. If needed, the pavement could be strengthened beyond the initial 12,500 lb. SWL. The initial Visual Flight Route (VFR) status of the airport could be upgraded to Non-Precision Instrument (NPI). It should be noted that in the initial earthwork project Part 77 earthwork obstructions to NPI airspace clearance will be removed in the process involving borrow for the necessary embankment. Thus, it will be relatively easy to upgrade the airport to NPI from VFR if and when needed.

It is anticipated that Federal funds (currently on a 90% Federal 10% local matching ratio) will be available to aid in the implementation of the initial and long range plans for Ekalaka Airport. The initial project is divided into two

phases with Phase I involving the preparation of documents including the Site Selection Study, Airport Layout Plan and this Environmental Assessment (EA) report as well as land acquisition. In the Phase I FAA Grant all of the land required for the ultimate 4800 x 75 foot runway, the associated ultimate parallel taxiway and other ultimate facilities for this airport will be acquired. An immediate future Phase II grant will involve the actual construction of the initial airport improvements.

1.5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Facilities

The new Ekalaka Airport will be owned by Carter County. The Sponsor will be the County Commissioners who will be served by an advisory board designated as the Carter County Airport Board, Earnest Tooke, Chairman.

The airport site from the Courthouse at Ekalaka to the center of the building development area at the airport is 1.1 road miles. Activities at the present Carter County Airport consist of private business and crop spraying operations. There is no FBO on the airport. Fuel is not now available at the existing airport. A site is planned in the new building apron area for a future fueling facility if or when that is needed. The new airport will in effect have two operational landing strips - the 4800-foot x 60-foot wide asphalt surface primary runway and a cross-wind turf facility. The 2500-foot turf facility will be gained as an incidental to the construction of the primary runway.

A cut on the turf cross-wind strip requiring excavation will be used for borrow to make embankment on the primary runway. Additional excavation will be obtained to complete a useable

cross-wind strip in the areas requiring fill. It should be noted that this 2500-foot cross-wind strip is relatively short. The cross-wind strip is needed because of an apparent increase in the prevalence of hard winds out of the southwest. For light planes this southwest wind may create danger in any attempt to use the primary runway for these cross-wind landings. In landing into the southwest wind effective use can be made of the relatively short 2500-foot landing strip.

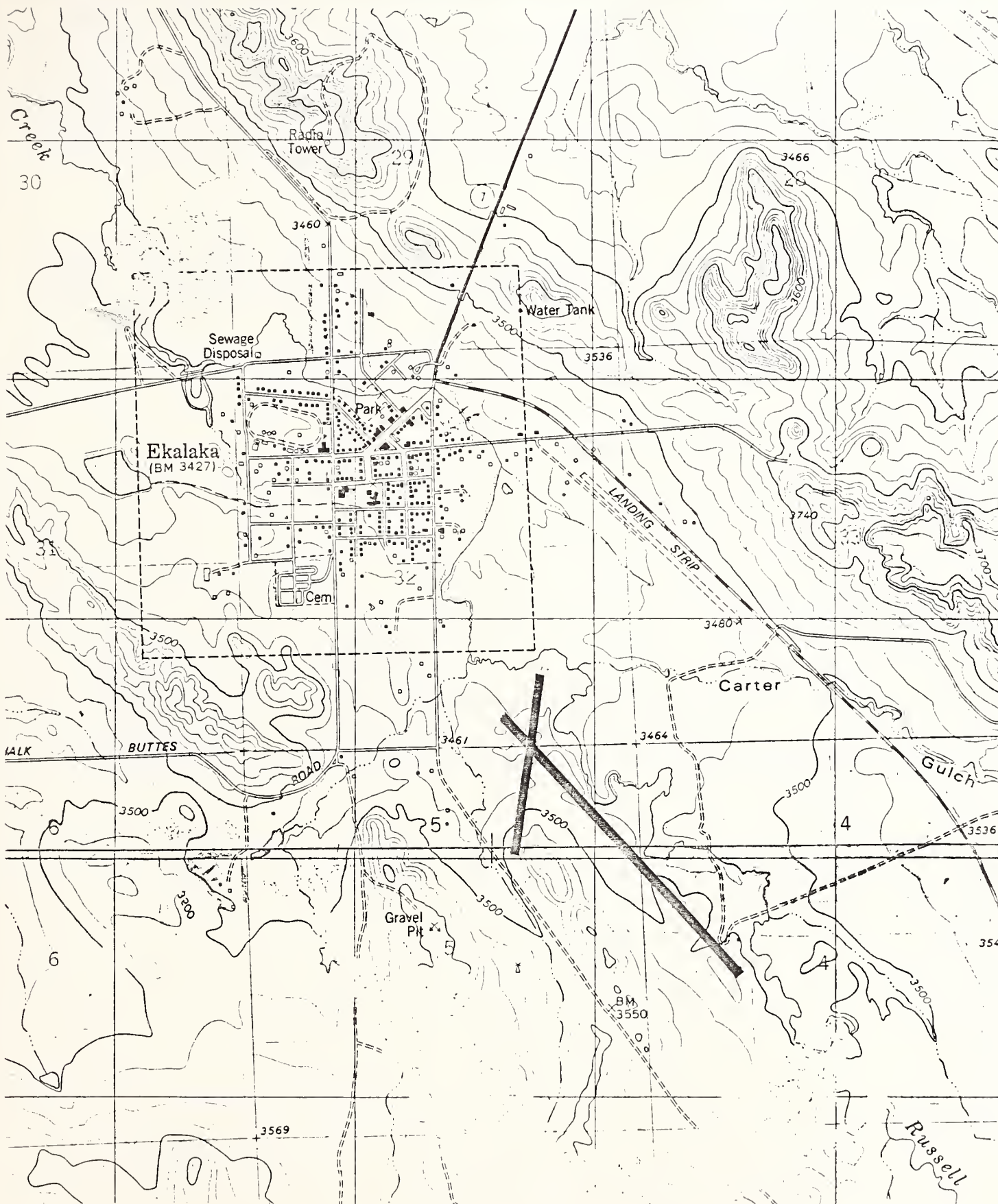
B. Economic and Financial Factors

Carter County has anticipated the need for this new airport for quite a number of years. In accordance with State law they have accumulated monies in reserve which will provide \$120,000.00 for the anticipated initial FAA land purchase and construction grants as well as established reserves for the operation and maintenance of the new airport. It should be noted that all funding for the airport, including the purchase of land will receive nine Federal dollars for each one dollar of local costs. The capability to fly in ambulance planes is judged to have significant potential for serving a basic need for all of the people of Carter County.

C. Other Social/Economic Factors

There has been no formal master planning done in and for the Town of Ekalaka and Carter County. The following population historical data gives the population picture for the Town and County.

	<u>Town</u>	<u>County</u>
1980	620	1799
1970	663	1956
1960	738	2493
1950	904	2798



VICINITY MAP

FIGURE 3

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While the County presently is not showing growth, the airport could accommodate significant growth should mineral development or some other unanticipated economic factor bring such a need about. The airport will foster new economic activity by its use for out-of-state hunters to fly into Ekalaka.

The Town of Ekalaka serves the function of not only the County Seat of Carter County but also as the agricultural trade center for the County.

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

SECTION 2.1 - GENERAL

SECTION 2.2 - NO PROJECT/DO NOTHING

SECTION 2.3 - IMPROVE THE EXISTING AIRPORT

SECTION 2.4 - ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROJECT SITE

CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 GENERAL

The County has three basic alternatives which have been considered and identified as follows:

- No Project/Do Nothing
- Improve the Existing Airport
- Develop on an All New Site

2.2 NO PROJECT/DO NOTHING

The no project alternative would limit the capability of Carter County to serve the aviation needs of the community. More importantly, it would deny the people of the Town and County the much needed emergency medical service anticipated by the ability to land ambulance planes at Ekalaka.

2.3 IMPROVE THE EXISTING AIRPORT

On the existing site there is only room for expansion to approximately 3700 LF. This would severely limit the capability of the airport to serve the much needed ambulance planes. There is no room for a cross-wind strip. Since FAA cannot put their money into the existing site, even minimal improvements with County funds (estimated at \$250,000_ would

be financially prohibitive. This alternative is not viable or financially feasible.

2.4 INITIAL AND ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW PROJECT SITE

In Section 1.1, the initial project facilities have been identified and discussed. The Airport Layout Plans (Appendix C) shows that some day, if and when required, the cross-wind (17/35) strip could be extended across Russell Creek for a ultimate length of at least 3850-lineal feet. While this type of an extension involving the crossing of Russell Creek would be a major undertaking it would not be prohibitive. Because of the broad flat cross-section of this creek streambed such an eventual landing strip extension across the creek could be worked into the floodplain of the creek. The embankment would serve to divert flood water out of the present low water streambed and carry it around the end of the extended runway in an earth spillway facility that would be adequate to handle the 100-year flood. A relatively small culvert would be built into the fill section at the present low water thread of the stream to drain the pond behind the "dam" at the end of the storm runoff.

As has been stated the primary runway can readily be widened from 60-feet to 75-feet if and when the type of aircraft using the facility justifies that expenditure. The earthwork cross-section will be graded initially for a 150-foot shoulder width. This is the ultimate general utility earthwork width to be a companion feature for a 75-foot pavement width. The initial 60-foot wide pavement will be so situated relative to the centerline of the 150-foot earthwork section that the eventual widening, if and when needed, can involve 15-feet of additional pavement on the east side away from the future parallel taxiway and the building area. The initial runway lights on the building area side of the runway will be constructed at a permanent location for the potential 75-foot wide pavement. If and when the 15-foot widening is done to the east, the runway lights on the east side of the initial

runway would need to be moved out 15-feet. Initial PAPI facility will be located on Runway 13 to guide aircraft as they approach over the Town of Ekalaka. Some day PAPI as desired can be added on the Runway 31 end. Initially the existing beacon, located on the hills about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the present airport, will be retained as the site of a high intensity beacon. This existing beacon will be remodeled to a like new condition at this existing site. The existing beacon will serve to guide aircraft as they approach the hilly terrain around Ekalaka. The beacon will, in effect, get the pilot into proximity with the Town of Ekalaka so that he can discern the lights of the town.

As an energy conservation measure the medium intensity runway lighting system will be controllable by the pilot as they approach the field. Ultimately, runway end identification lights can be installed on the 31 end of the runway as a further guide into the airport. Note that the installation of Runway End Identification Lights (REIL) or OMNI-Directional Approach Lighting System (ODALS) strobe type lights on runway 31 will be at the extreme opposite end from the town where there is no urban development and no rural homes within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the facility.

In the matter of permits and licenses required for the construction of the new airport, the construction contractor will be required to take out a permit with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in order to use water from Russell Creek.

No flood plain permit is required for this initial project because the crosswind landing strip (17/35) will not intrude upon the floodplain of Russell Creek. If and when this 17/35 landing strip is ever extended across Russell Creek to attain the length shown on the ALP, a Section 4.04 permit will need to be acquired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

CHAPTER 3
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 GENERAL

The area of Carter County immediately around Ekalaka is hilly terrain covered with pine trees. Average temperature is 43.8 degrees F. The average rainfall is 15.2 inches and the mean annual snowfall is 28.0 inches. Utilization of the County's developed land includes residential, commercial, agricultural, and public oriented activities. Agriculture is presently the dominant land use.

3.2 PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Note that the Airport Layout Plan has been drawn on a recent aerial photograph as a base map. This furnishes a way to show the existing land use, basically agricultural, around the airport except for the Town and surrounding urban development. Schools, places of public assembly, hospitals, and the Central Business District have been identified on Figure 3.1.

The proposed construction of the new airport runway, apron and

related taxiway facilities will involve a relatively high amount of earthwork movement per unit of runway length. The airport site is a side hill section extending from the hills on the westerly side of the runway gradually easterly across a bench. At the easterly property line the terrain breaks sharply down into the broad valley of Russell Creek. Parallel to the centerline the terrain undulates with cuts and fills of from 10 to 15-feet maximum. The present land use is for grazing except for a small amount of cultivated dry land at the south end of the runway. There is a heavy growth of sage brush on this site. Where practical, this sage brush will be left in place as a means of wind erosion control. During snow conditions this should somewhat prevent the wind from gaining a broad sweep that would result if this sage brush were removed anymore than is necessary. As noted, there will be some earthwork removal for Part 77 clearance in the 250-foot location west of the runway centerline. For NPI Part 77 ultimate requirements the top easterly side of the hill along the west side of the runway will be excavated off as a source of borrow for runway embankment construction.

3.3 SOCIO/ECONOMIC CONSIDERATION

From an access standpoint the location of the new airport, relative to the Town of Ekalaka, is relatively favorable. The centerline has been rotated over the town as far westerly as terrain and other considerations will allow. The projected runway 13 over the Town of Ekalaka is not as favorable as would be desirable. The need to extend the centerline over the town to this extent has to be weighed against the need to keep the runway at adequate distance from the above-mentioned hill for FAA Part 77 airspace clearance. Further, the southerly end of the runway has to be kept up on the bench above Russell Creek so that practical earthwork and adequate sight distance can be maintained.

The site provides adequate area to accommodate all anticipated facility growth; both for initial and ultimate development.

Refer to the attached Figure 3.1 map and Table 3.1 for the relationship of the northerly and of the new runway to the Town of Ekalaka and various places of public assembly.

Figure 3.1

Location of Noise Sensitive Receptors
and Places of Public Assembly

(See Table 3.1, page 19 for distance to,
and identification of numbers 1-6)



Approach Surface

End of R/W

Scale: 1" = 400'

TABLE 3.1

DISTANCES TO NOISE SENSITIVE
RECEPTORS AND PLACES OF
PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

MAP NO.	DESCRIPTION	DISTANCE OFF END OF RUNWAY
1	Grade School	3450'±
2	Carter County Courthouse	3250'±
3	Hospital	3150'±
4	High School	4100'±
5	County Fair Building	4700'±
6	Rodeo Arena	5050'±
7	Central Business District (CDB)	3900'±

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

SECTION 4.1	-	NOISE
SECTION 4.2	-	COMPATIBLE LAND USE
SECTION 4.3	-	SOCIAL IMPACTS
SECTION 4.4	-	INDUCED SOCIO/ECONOMIC IMPACTS
SECTION 4.5	-	AIR QUALITY
SECTION 4.6	-	WATER QUALITY AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
SECTION 4.7	-	DOT SECTION 4(f)
SECTION 4.8	-	HISTORICAL, ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SECTION 4.9	-	BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
SECTION 4.10	-	ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES OF FLOR AND FAUNA
SECTION 4.11	-	WETLANDS
SECTION 4.12	-	FLOODPLAINS
SECTION 4.13	-	COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
SECTION 4.14	-	COASTAL BARRIERS
SECTION 4.15	-	WILD AND SCENIC PRIVERS
SECTION 4.16	-	PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND
SECTION 4.17	-	ENERGY SUPPLY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SECTION 4.18	-	LIGHT EMISSIONS
SECTION 4.19	-	SOLID WASTE IMPACT
SECTION 4.20	-	CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS
SECTION 4.21	-	ACTION RELATIVE TO EXISTING AIRPORT

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 NOISE

Per FAA Order 1050.1C, Appendix 6, Chapter 5, paragraph 47e, (1) (a): "No noise analysis is needed for proposals involving utility or basic transport type airports whose forecast operations in the period covered by the environmental assessment do not exceed 90,000 annual adjusted propeller operations or 700 annual adjusted jet operations."

The highest possible anticipated total operations for Ekalaka Airport for the ultimate situation is substantially less than 90,000 annual adjusted propeller operations. Therefore, since the 90,000 total adjusted operations limitation, will not be exceeded, no noise analysis is required.

4.2 COMPATIBLE LAND USE

As per FAA Order 1050.1C, Appendix 6, Chapter 5, paragraph 47e, (2) (a): "if the noise analysis...concludes that there is no significant impact, a similar conclusion usually may be drawn with respect to compatible land use." Therefore it is concluded that with respect to noise the airport is compatible with adjacent land use.

Since this airport site is outside the limits of the Town of Ekalaka state law does not allow the County to zone the area around the airport. The County does recognize the need to keep urban type development from encroaching on the airport to the greatest extent practical. Clear zone avigational easements will be obtained on all four of the approaches to the primary runway and the cross-wind landing strip.

4.3 SOCIAL IMPACTS

The proposed new development of Ekalaka Airport will require a relocation of one 3 person family from an existing rental residence on the southerly or Runway 31 end. This existing house and the adjacent building originally served as a building area to support the adjacent farm and ranch unit. Because terrain rising to the south toward the end of Runway 31, it is necessary to completely remove the farm buildings including corrals, grain silos, car shed and abandoned barn from the area required for the southerly extension of the runway for a 4800-foot length. It is not necessary from a Part 77 or property line standpoint to remove the residence. However its proximity to the runway dictates that it too should be removed in the initial development. The land appraisal process and subsequent negotiation for land and right-of-way will take into consideration the acquisition of these developments and their complete removal.

The current residents of this rental unit will be fully advised of their rights under the displaced person provisions of current U.S. Department of Transportation regulations. There is ample housing available in Ekalaka so these families can be readily rehoused.

4.4 INDUCED SOCIO/ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The proposed new airport will have a net positive socio/economic impact on Carter County and the Town of Ekalaka. There will be some increase in the amount of locally purchased products sold to itinerant air travelers which have not previously been able to fly into Ekalaka. The availability of emergency medical transportation out of Ekalaka will lend a sense of well being that will fill a long felt need. The present business community can furnish the required additional commercial service to the new airport. A more adequate airport will foster an increase in the recreation activities of outsiders coming into the County to hunt. This is already quite an economic factor which will be enhanced by the new airport.

4.5 AIR QUALITY

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1C, Appendix 6, Chapter 5, paragraph 47e, (f)(c)³: "general utility and basic transport airports have been determined not to have a potential to emit levels of sulfur dioxide and particulates in excess of those guidelines documented for "Prevention of Significant Deterioration".

The Montana State Air Quality Bureau was contacted regarding potential air quality impacts for this new airport. In their undated letter included in Appendix B, they stated that "No long-term air quality impacts are expected due to the construction of a new airport. Some fugitive dust can be expected during the construction activity, but this can be controlled with water trucks, when necessary."

4.6 WATER QUALITY AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Refer to letter dated April 14, 1989 in Appendix B expressing the concerns of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their concerns are addressed as follows and in Section 4.20 "Construction Impacts".

The proposed new Ekalaka Airport will not include any facility improvements that will have a significant effect on water quality at or surrounding the airport. This conclusion is supported by the following considerations.

Potable water for the Town of Ekalaka is obtained from deep wells. The Town has water main which extends southerly in the County Road running along the west side of the airport. The County, by arrangement with the Town, can extend this water main to the airport building area if and when a water supply is needed for sanitary and drinking water purposes. However, in the initial development it is not anticipated that such a "public" water supply will be required. Rather any drinking water required will be conveyed to the site in individual drinking water containers for the use of people working at the airport. Sanitary needs on the airport will, for the foreseeable future, be served with latrine type disposal facilities. If a public water system is ultimately developed it will then be practical to also install rest room facilities with wastewater disposal into a septic tank drain field system.

Stormwater runoff will be designed to flow through a series of about three (3) culverts through the runway into the present natural coulees which discharge into Russell Creek. The addition of pavement on the runway will increase the amount of runoff into Russell Creek as contrasted with the present grazing land surfaces. Russell Creek is a stream with a 27-square mile runoff area. This means that the stormwater from the airport will concentrate and run down Russell Creek before the discharge from the overall drainage basin reaches the airport site.

During the final engineering design the handling of all stormwater runoff will be considered in detail. However, now it can be anticipated that this drainage will involve culverts

through the runway which will be sized to handle the projected flows expected during a five (5) year rainfall frequency. As this condition will not effect the water quality in Russell Creek it can be concluded that no adverse impact will result from stormwater runoff. Runoff from all turf areas adjacent to the pavement will be off a well grassed area. Turbid water runoff is thus not anticipated. It is not anticipated that petroleum wastes or fuel spillage in the airport building area will be a factor as far as discharge into Russell Creek. However, in the future if development is such that this does become a factor, the terrain elevation of approximately 15 feet from the building area to the creek channel will allow installation of detention ponds to contain the contaminated runoff and handle it in a manner to minimize contamination. It is hereby recommended that the county insure through airport standards, that oil and grease traps be incorporated into the hangar and apron construction to collect used petroleum fluids. Proper disposal of petroleum products thus collected should be done properly and periodically.

Crop spraying out of the existing airport and from the new airport are important to the agricultural economy of Carter County. It is recognized that the use and handling of agricultural chemicals is environmentally important. During the construction planning stage, as the existing airport is converted to other uses and crop sprayer facilities are built into the new airport, this aspect will be fully addressed to the satisfaction of EPA, the Solid and Hazardous Waste Bureau of the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences and the Montana Department of Agriculture.

4.7 DOT SECTION 4(f)

The proposed improvements to the Ekalaka Airport do not in any way involve the use of any publicly owned land from a public

park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance, or any land from a historic site of national, state or local significance. Therefore this project is not subject to the provisions of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.

4.8 HISTORICAL, ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

A contact was made with the State Historical Preservation Office in Helena. This agency responded through David Schwab, State Archeologist, as per letter in Appendix B, to the affect that they wanted to have a cultural resource survey on the project site before the beginning of construction. They further stated that they did not believe it would be necessary to conduct this survey before land acquisition for the airport and that they would concur in an agreement to conduct the study at a later time prior to actual construction.

4.9 BIOTIC COMMUNITIES

As per FAA Order 1050.1C, Appendix 6, Chapter 5, paragraph 47e.(9) (d)1; "if the proposal would impact only man dominated areas such as the airport property to be disturbed by construction, populated areas or farmland, it may be assumed that there will be no significant impact on the biotic communities". This situation applies on this airport. Current use is primarily for agricultural purposes and more specifically for dryland grazing. The area does not represent one of pristine biotic communities. No significant impacts to the biotic community is forecast as the result of the construction of this airport.

4.10 ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES OF FLORA AND FAUNA

While the construction of this new airport for Carter County will result in the building of man made structures, the project has been determined to not be one that significantly

affects the quality of the human environment. In the matter of Endangered Species, responses were received from the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Research and Technical Service Bureau of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. See copies of these letters in Appendix B. The response from the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is dated April 14 and is signed by Dennis L. Flath, Non-Game Coordinator. The letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is dated March 28 and is signed by Kemper McMaster, Acting State Supervisor, Montana State Office, Helena, MT. These letters in effect say that while there is concern over endangered species, it is felt that enough work had been done in the area of the airport to reach a "no effect" conclusion for Blackfooted Ferrets and that raptor proofing any new powerlines would resolve any potential hazard to Bald Eagles or Peregrine Falcons. Thus it is judged that concerns relative to endangered or threatened species of Flora and Fauna have been adequately addressed.

4.11 WETLANDS

A contact was made with the Billings office of the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Larry Robson, Environmental Research Specialist, is in charge of the office. Mr. Robson visited the airport site and went over the project in the field with the author of this Environmental Assessment. Refer to letter from the Corps of Engineers dated April 18, 1989. In this letter that agency said there was no encroachment on Russell Creek. Mr. Robson further stated that there was no significant effect on wetlands by virtue of the initial or ultimate airport projects.

4.12 FLOODPLAINS

Again referring to the Corps of Engineers letter referenced in 4.11 above, a visit by the Corps of Engineers representative essentially indicated that the proposed airport site,

including the initial cross-wind strip, is not within the limits of the base floodplain of Russell Creek. In the future if the cross-wind landing strip is extended across Russell Creek to lengthen it to its potential 3850 foot length, there would be an impact on the Russell Creek floodplain. At that time, a Section 404 flood plain permit will need to be obtained from the Corps of Engineers. See the proceeding Subsection 2.4 for a discussion of an ultimate crosswind extension of the 17/35 landing strip across Russell Creek if that is ever deemed necessary.

4.13 COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The development of this airport will in no way affect any Coastal Zone Management Programs.

4.14 COASTAL BARRIERS

Development of this airport will in no way affect any Coastal Barriers.

4.15 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Development of this airport will in no way affect any Wild and Scenic River.

4.16 PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND

The site for the construction of the new airport will involve an acquisition of 110 acres directly and 47 acres indirectly for a total of 178 acres. Approximately 24 acres of the 157 acre acquisition may remain outside the airport fence and returned to its present grazing land use by rental to adjacent ranchers. According to the communication from the head of the County Soil Conservation Service office in Ekalaka, bound in Appendix B, none of this 178 acres is defined as "prime and unique farmland" as defined in the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). There are 38 acres in this acquisition which are designated "statewide and local important farmland". Rating this land on the basis of the AD-1006

"Farmland Conversion Impact Rating" (see Appendix B), this site has a point total of 59 compared to a maximum total of 160. According to Paragraph 47(e)(16)(d)1 of FAA Order 5050.4A, a point total of less than 160 indicates that the use of this site will cause no significant impact from a farmland standpoint.

The 49 acres in the existing airport site are to be returned by the County to use as cropland or urban type development which will directly relate to the support of Carter County's agricultural economy.

In effect, with the return of the existing airport site to agricultural or related use, the farm land impact of the acquisition of the new airport site is minimal.

4.17 ENERGY SUPPLY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

As has been stated elsewhere in this report, there is an existing airport at Ekalaka which is to be abandoned in favor of this new airport construction. This airport has an existing lighting system, lighted windcone and beacon.

While the new airport will probably use power at a maximum rate twice that of the existing airport, its overall power consumption should be comparable to the existing field. This is because the runway lights will only be on when called by radio from an incoming pilot as compared to present dusk on continuously to dawn situation at the existing airport. In their May 4, 1989 letter it was stated (Appendix B):

"Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the supplying utility where the proposed project is being planned. The cooperative does have adequate power to serve the proposed project which will be billed on the basis of the standard extension policy.

Cooperative personnel will be available to work with the design people to accommodate any concern which may arise as the project develops. It does not appear at the onset that there will be any major problems.

The cooperative has adequate facilities and serving the project will not create any burden to the other members of the Cooperative."

The necessary pavement and other construction of the new airport will not represent a major impact on resources. Travel for airport users from the Town of Ekalaka will be essentially the same for the new airport as is the case with the existing airport.

4.18 LIGHT EMISSIONS

The new runway will have a new medium intensity lighting system. Also PAPI will be installed on Runway 13 initially and may be installed ultimately on Runway 31. It is also conceivable that ultimate development may involve end of runway identification lights (REIL) or OMNI-Directional Approach Lighting System (ODALS) on Runway 31.

While these lights will flash stroboscopically, their location at this 31 end of runway will not significantly impact any human habitation due to the lack of residential development. The nearest rural home to this end of the runway is at least ½ mile away.

4.19 SOLID WASTE IMPACT

Potential for additional solid waste generated at this airport is slight. The residents of the Town of Ekalaka contracts individually with a private contractor to dispose of their solid wastes. If ultimately it is necessary to dispose of solid wastes from the airport the County can readily contract with this same contractor for the necessary disposal service.

Location of the landfill is approximately 2 miles west of the Town and thus is well beyond any environmental impact on the new airport.

4.20 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The construction impact of the new airport will be minimal. The earthwork operation will involve the creation of a certain amount of dust but that will be minimized by the fact that the contractor will be required to use a considerable volume of water for gaining optimum moisture on compaction of embankments. This will minimize the tendency for dust to be created. Water required for earthwork can be obtained from Russell Creek. The contractor will be required to obtain the necessary permit to take water from this source by an arrangement with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. In as much as this project will not involve hot plant mix pavement, there will be no smoke created by a hot plant. The type of paved surface will involve bituminous surface treatments which do not involve the creation of asphalt plant smoke or dust. The base aggregates for the pavement section will be obtained from gravel deposits on the airport site. To gain adequate quality of gravel for the surface course, aggregate will need to be hauled in from considerable distance to meet FAA specifications. Gravel may come from as far away as Marmoth, North Dakota, approximately 60 miles distance from the airport or from gravel deposits in the vicinity of Miles City, Montana or Spearfish, South Dakota.

There will be temporary impacts to wildlife as a consequence of construction noise. Impact will be a temporary disorientation and disruption for birds which should stabilize soon after the completion of construction. This impact will be minimal. The displacement of a few small animals as a result of construction, and disrupting and eliminating their terrestrial habitat will cause loss of some species numbers. However these losses will be stabilized soon after construction activities are completed.

In all cases, the project specifications for construction will incorporate provisions of FAA Advisory Circular 150-5370-7 Airport Construction Controls to Prevent Air and Water Pollution.

4.21 ACTION RELATIVE TO EXISTING AIRPORT SITE

As a part of the FAA participating project the hangars on the existing airport site will be moved to the building area on the new airport. The existing lights will be removed for possible use at other airport sites. These low intensity fixtures cannot be used at the new airport. Rather new medium intensity lights and circuits will be provided.

All airport facilities on the existing site will be removed and salvaged for use elsewhere as is practical.

CHAPTER 5

CONSISTENCY WITH LAND USE PLANS

(Environmental Consequences - Other Considerations)

SECTION 5.1 - POSSIBLE CONFLICTS

SECTION 5.2 - INCONSISTENCY WITH APPROVED PLANS

SECTION 5.3 - ADVERSE IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

SECTION 5.4 - CONTROVERSIAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS

CHAPTER 5
CONSISTENCY WITH LAND USE PLANS
(Environmental Consequences - Other Considerations)

5.1 POSSIBLE CONFLICTS

The proposed construction of this new Ekalaka Airport is in agreement with the objectives of Federal, Regional, State and local land use plans, policies and controls for the area.

5.2 INCONSISTENCY WITH APPROVED PLANS

There are no documented, implied or recognized inconsistencies with approved State or local plans and laws.

5.3 ADVERSE IMPACT MITIGATION MEASURES

Any potential air quality or water quality impacts related to construction activities will be addressed prior to construction and plans will be prepared for the handling of hazardous conditions appropriately.

5.4 CONTROVERSIAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS

None of the impacts identified for the proposed new construction of this airport were determined to be significant and consequently none of the environmental considerations are anticipated to be controversial.

CHAPTER 6

LIST OF PREPARERS

SECTION 6.1 - LIST OF PREPARERS

CHAPTER 6

LIST OF PREPARERS

6.1 LIST OF PREPARERS

The contract for preparation of the Airport Site Selection Study for Carter County and this Environmental Assessment was executed between Carter County and HKM Associates of Billings, Montana. A list of the individuals with primary responsibility for the preparation of this assessment follows:

HKM ASSOCIATES

David W. McCullough, P.E., Principal-in-Charge of Project and Senior Vice-President of HKM Associates was the principal author of this report. He was assisted by James M. Fels, P.E. Airport Engineer.

Experience - Environmental Assessment Reports for the following airport projects:

- Breckenridge-Wahpeton, North Dakota - 1979
- Laurel Airport, Montana - 1980 and 1988
- Beulah-Hazen Airport, North Dakota - 1980
- Parshall-Hankins Airport, Parshall, North Dakota - 1984



DAVID W. McCULLOUGH, P.E., L.S.

Senior Vice President

REGISTRATION:

Professional Engineer in Montana,
Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota

EDUCATION:

Montana State University, B.S. Civil
Engineering, 1947

ORGANIZATIONS:

American Society of Civil Engineers,
President, Montana Section, 1964
National Society of Professional
Engineers
Montana Society of Engineers,
President, 1970
Kiwanis, Elks and various masonic
organizations

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY:

HKM Associates, Billings, Montana, 1970–present

Senior Vice President and special project engineer for design, construction engineering and environmental impact considerations on municipal water systems, sanitary sewer and storm drain systems, fire protection systems, rural water systems, and streets, airports, and highways.

ADAP and AIP projects at Logan International Airport, Billings, Montana. These eight airport projects involved extensive work on Runway 9L/27R, the main instrument runway at Billings, including two 4" asphalt overlay projects, lengthening this runway by 1880 lineal feet including 1,300,000 cubic yard earthwork projects, and two complete anti-skid porous friction course overlays at 7 year intervals. At the Billings Airport the work included the completion of the primary Logan Field Taxiway system including new construction, asphalt overlay strengthening and the first taxiway porous friction course placed in the Rocky Mountain Region, a real boon to combat wintertime icy conditions. At Billings the work involved the design and construction of a complete new parallel Runway 9R/27L including grading, drainage, paving and numerous lighting and fencing projects.

DAVID W. McCULLOUGH, P.E., L.S.

Airport Location, Master Planning and Design Projects, Montana and North Dakota. Airport designs including planning and construction of paving and lighting on ten projects at air carrier airports for Miles City, Glendive, Sidney and Wolf Point and paving and lighting on federal aid airport projects at Red Lodge, Terry, Libby, and Laurel, all in Montana. This service also involved airport location and master planning studies for Broadus, Ekalaka, Lewistown, and Laurel, Montana, and at the North Dakota airport sites of Beulah-Hazen, Parshall, and Wahpeton.

Street and Highway Design Projects, Montana. Surface transportation improvements have included major arterial street paving projects in Billings, Laurel, and Lewistown. Also, studies and construction designs for Montana Department of Highways in Billings and Lewistown.

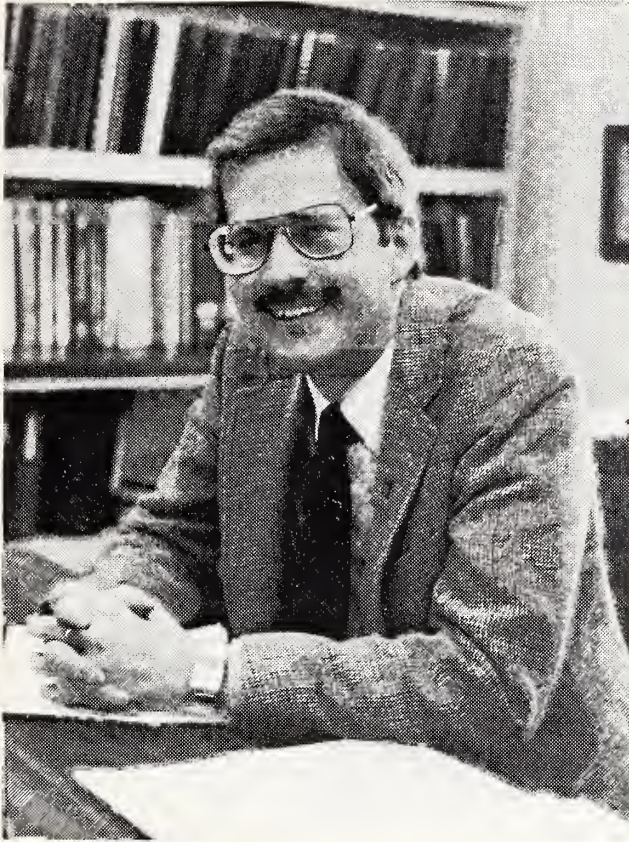
Utilities and Storm Drain Systems, Montana. Utility and storm drainage have included new and extensions of existing water distribution systems in Lockwood, Hysham, Lewistown, Broadus, and Billings Heights. Also the Tiber Rural Water System for a five-county north central Montana project which involved 430 miles of distribution main, six pump stations, and four storage reservoirs to serve about 300 farm homes and livestock facilities.

Storm Drainage System, Logan International Airport, Billings, Montana. A storm drain system design for Logan International Airport involved a unique approach to avoid a negative environmental impact on Alkali Creek and its adjacent residential area. Instead of an 84 inch pipe discharging directly into Alkali Creek, storm water is conveyed into a series of earth ponds for storage for delay and time release of storm water. This cut the discharge rate to that of a 24-inch pipe.

Utility System Administration and Structure, Montana. Municipal projects have often involved rate studies, testimony before Boards and Commissions, and creation of County Water and Sewer Districts as provided for in Montana law.

Morrison-Maierle, Inc., Billings, Montana, 1947-1970

Initial position in this firm following graduation from Montana State University in 1947 involved project engineer and chief of survey parties. Held progressively more responsible positions in the firm. Prior to appointment as Billings Office Manager, worked as head of the transportation section responsible for such projects as Glasgow, Montana streets and telephone company microwave access roads. In 1957 became Vice President and Billings Office Manager responsible for such projects as Glasgow Air Force Base Air Field design, City of Billings sanitary and storm sewer projects, interstate highway design for the State of Montana, and three major airport improvement projects at Logan International Airport.



JAMES M. FELS, P.E.

Transportation Engineer

REGISTRATION:

Professional Engineer in Montana

EDUCATION:

University of Pittsburgh, 1979
Harrisburg Area Community College,
Math and Fortran

ORGANIZATIONS:

American Society of Civil Engineers,
President-elect, Montana Section,
1988-89

Institute of Transportation Engineers
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY:

HKM Associates, 1979-present

Project manager responsible for planning, scheduling, and coordination of projects. Provide support to the Transportation Division in the areas of transportation analysis and airport engineering. Background and practice includes urban and transportation systems and airport engineering.

City of Billings, Broadwater Avenue, 5th Street West - 9th Street West, Billings, Montana. Project manager for improvements that required widening from 4 lanes to 5 lanes of a principal arterial within the City of Billings. The project includes signal upgrading and interconnection, design, plans, specifications, and public involvement process. Montana Department of Highways funding and design standards, and subconsultant coordination were involved.

Laurel Airport Improvement Projects ADAP-01, and AIP-02, Laurel, Montana. Staff Engineer and Project Manager. Staff engineer or project manager for these three projects which ranged from safety upgrading of the airport to implementing the development program of the master plan. Work

JAMES M. FELS, P.E.

included drainage analysis, pavement design, grading, minor electrical, VASI installation, hangar area expansion, FAR Part 77 and line of sight analysis, parallel taxiway extension and turnaround construction. The project provided various levels of exposure to client coordination, FAA design standards, and bidding and construction administration processes.

City of Billings, Big Sky International Airshow, Billings, Montana. Provided general consulting and support services to the City of Billings Aviation Department for the 1986 Big Sky International Airshow. Support included pavement investigation and evaluation, FAA airspace reviews, and landside traffic coordination. More than 40,000 performers and spectators were accommodated in two days at a major spectator event.

Holiday Inn West, Accessibility Studies, Billings, Montana. Project manager for these projects which consisted of two small area transportation engineering studies investigating the impact on the surrounding street network of the proposed developments. One proposal was for a 96 room hotel addition. The other was for a 36,000+ square foot exhibition hall and trade show area. Street capacity, signal warrants, pedestrian concerns, parking, and financial impact were evaluated.

North Pointe Square, K-Mart Accessibility Study, Billings, Montana. Staff engineer for the K-Mart accessibility study which was a small area transportation study undertaken on the fringe of the Billings urban environment. The study addressed the traffic impacts of a full shopping center development on the adjacent street network. The study evaluated right-of-way acquisition, curb cuts, signal warrants, intersection capacity, parking, and public improvement financing. The project was proposed for an entirely undeveloped commercially zoned parcel.

Skelly & Loy, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Summer 1978

Environmental technician working as assistant to many professionals involved in the firm's major projects. Projects were primarily mining and environmentally oriented including environmental impact and abandoned minelands demonstration projects. Tasks consisted of both office and field assignments.

Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1976

Project technician for a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development project. Responsible for distribution of flood hazard boundary maps to communities nationwide. Organized maps, their essential data and other project materials for proper distribution, classification and recording.

CHAPTER 7

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

CHAPTER 7

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Copies of this Environmental Assessment are on file in the Ekalaka Public Library, Town Hall at Ekalaka, in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder in the Courthouse at Ekalaka, in the FAA District Airport Office at the Helena regional Airport, Helena, Montana and in the Billings office of HKM Associates, Airport Industrial Park.

A public informational meeting will be held in Ekalaka at a future date. On the day following the public information meeting, a public hearing will be conducted in conformance with FAA regulations for a new airport. Notice of the public information meeting and the public hearing will be published in The Eagle, the newspaper serving Carter County.

APPENDIX A

A-95 COORDINATION



**HKM Associates
Engineers/Planners**

Airport Industrial Park
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, Montana 59107
Phone (406) 245-6354/259-1993
Fax (406) 252-3757

Branch Offices:
Bozeman, Montana
Sheridan, Wyoming

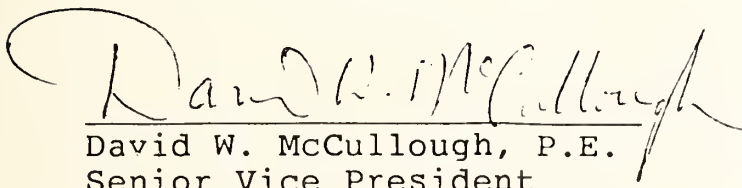
To Whom It May Concern:

Until Carter County acquires land for the new airport, successfully completes the Environmental Review of which this Environmental Assessment is a part, and obtains FAA approval of an Airport Layout Plan, they are not eligible to formally apply for an FAA grant for land acquisition and construction. All of these three steps are now concurrently underway. They are being performed according to the requirements of FAA and under the surveillance of that Federal Agency.

Anticipating that an application for Federal assistance will be made to FAA upon the successful completion of the three steps discussed above, a contact was made with the Montana State IGR Clearinghouse. As per their March 22, 1989 letter which follows, HKM Associates made a first class mail contact with about forty State, Federal and local agencies thought to have an interest in this project, environmental and otherwise. A tabulation of all responses received by HKM Associates follows the State Clearinghouse letter. The letters where environmental concerns were expressed are included in Appendix B. In the text of this EA and especially Chapter 3 "Affected Environment", these environmental concerns have been addressed.

The responses from persons or agencies expressing no comment of unqualified support for the project are on file in the Billings, MT office of HKM Associates. They may be examined in that office. Copies may be received by a request to HKM, P.O. Box 31318, Billings, MT 59107, Attention: Dave McCullough.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'David W. McCullough'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'D' and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

David W. McCullough, P.E.
Senior Vice President

APPENDIX B

LETTERS RELATIVE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS



ALLEN C. KOLSTAD
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Montana
Office of The Lieutenant Governor
Helena 59620
(406)444-3111

RECEIVED

MAR 24 1989

HKM ASSOCIATES

March 22, 1989

Mr. David W. McCullough, P.E.
HKM Associates
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, Montana 59107

RE: Ekalaka, Carter County Montana Airport Land Acquisition
Montana State IGR Clearinghouse SAI No. MT890322-477-X

Dear Mr. McCullough:

The above-captioned application for federal financial assistance has been received. In order to provide notification to parties that may be interested in review and/or comment on the proposal, it will be listed in the next Intergovernmental Review Bulletin issued from this office.

Any inquiries or comments regarding the proposal will be directed to you. Please provide copies of the enclosed suggested review form to potential reviewers, those you feel should be invited to comment, as well as to any who may request the opportunity to do so. Copies of any comments received and a copy of this letter should be submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation with the application papers, or forwarded to them to be attached if they are received after the application has been sent in. We have requested that comments be returned by April 22, 1989, and that copies be sent to the Clearinghouse for our files.

The Clearinghouse intends to take no further action on this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debbie Davis".

DEBBIE DAVIS
Clearinghouse Manager

Enclosure

**MONTANA INTERGOVERNMENTAL
REVIEW CLEARINGHOUSE**

REVIEW AND COMMENT FORM

HKM Associates

Applicant: Carter County Airport Board Phone: 317-876-1155

ATTN: Mr. David W. McCullough, P.E.

Address: P.O. Box 31318, Billings, Montana 59107

Subject: Ekalaka, Carter County Montana Airport Land Acquisition

Clearinghouse SAI No. MT890322-477-X

YOUR COOPERATION IS REQUESTED IN COMPLETING YOUR REVIEW AND RETURNING
THIS FORM WITH YOUR COMMENTS TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS, WITH A COPY TO THE
CLEARINGHOUSE, NO LATER THAN April 22, 1989

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Is this proposal consistent with the plans, goals and objectives of your agency?			
Does the proposed action conflict with any applicable statute, order, regulation or rule with which you are familiar?			
Does this proposal overlap, conflict or duplicate other existing programs or agencies?			

Describe any suggestions or means of improving or strengthening the proposed plan.

Please convey your general conclusion by checking the appropriate response(s).

- ☐ Proposal is supported.
- ☐ Support only with conditions described below.
- ☐ Non-supportive for the reasons described below.
- ☐ Additional information is desired as described below.
- ☐ No comment on this proposal.

REMARKS: _____

Reviewer: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to Applicant listed above, with a copy to: Montana IGR Clearinghouse
Lt. Governor's Office, Room 210
State Capitol
Helena, Montana 59620

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS ON PROPOSED EKALAKA AIRPORT PROJECT
EKALAKA, CARTER COUNTY, MT

RECEIVED REQUEST <u>OR COMMENTS</u>	<u>RESPONDED</u>	<u>FAVORABLE</u>	<u>CONDITIONAL</u>	<u>CONDITIONS</u> <u>EXPRESSED</u>
Ms. Alyce Kuehn	X	X		
U.S. Postmaster	X	X		
Mid River Telephone	X	X		
Southeastern Elec. Coop, Inc.	X	X		Expressed need for better airport
Dept. of Commerce Aeronautics Div. Airport Road Helena, MT	X	X		
Trans. Division Dept. of Commerce 1424 9th Ave. Helena, MT	X		X	Deferred to MT Aeronautics Commission
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks Project & Planning Bureau Parks Division 1420 E. Sixth Ave. Helena, MT	X		X	This branch of MT FWP not effected

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS ON PROPOSED EKALAKA AIRPORT PROJECT
EKALAKA, CARTER COUNTY, MT

<u>RECEIVED REQUEST</u> <u>OR COMMENTS</u>	<u>RESPONDED</u>	<u>FAVORABLE</u>	<u>CONDITIONAL</u>	<u>CONDITIONS</u> <u>EXPRESSED</u>
Dept. of FW&P	X		X	See USFWS reply-State says Feds concern not applicable
Air Pollution Bureau Dept. of Health & Env. Sciences	X		X	Generally favorable - See Letter
Western Tech. Center U.S. Dept. of the Interior				None
Bureau of Mines U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Spokane	X			No Comment
U.S. Dept. of Trans.	X		X	No direct involvement emphasized clearance over public roads
EPA	X		X	Attention to enviornmental Considerations required during construction
USF&WS, Helena	X		X	Concern expressed for endangered species

RECEIVED REQUEST

CONDITIONS

OR COMMENTSRESPONDED FAVORABLE CONDITIONALEXPRESSED

Non-Game Division

MT. FW&P, Bozeman

X

X

Answered U.S. F&WS

concern regarding

endangered species

Office of Surface

Mining

US Dept. Interior

X

X

No Comment

Milton Markuson

Carter County

Commissioner

X

X

Carter County

Soil Conservation

X

X

Office

Defined unique and

prime form land status

Carter Co. Ag. Stab.

X

X

Sierra Club

None

Fed. Emergency

Mgmt. Agency

N/A

Agency has no

authority flood

hazard map furnished

FHA

X

X

No Comment

Bureau of Land

Management

U.S. Dept. of

Interior,

Miles City

X

X

Inapplicable to their

agency

RECEIVED REQUEST

CONDITIONS

OR COMMENTSRESPONDED FAVORABLE CONDITIONALEXPRESSED

U.S. Dept. of
Interior-Billings

None

U.S. Dept. of
Interior-Reston, VA

None

U.S. Dept. of
Interior-Denver

None

BIA-Billings

MSU

Dept. of
Anthropology
Missoula, MT

None

Corps of Engineers
Dept. of the Army

X

X

No stream infringe-
ment apparent

Dept. of Health
& Env. Sciences

X

X

DNRC

X

X

Water Use for Const.
requires permit

Dept. of State
Lands

None

Env. Quality
Council

Helena, MT

X

X

RECEIVED REQUEST

CONDITIONS

OR COMMENTSRESPONDED FAVORABLE CONDITIONALEXPRESSED

MT. Dept. of

Agriculture

Helena, MT

X

X

Mt. Historical

Society

Helena, MT

X

X

Site okay but
recommend study prior
to construction

State Intergov.

Review (Clearing

House)

Helena, MT

X

X

Spelled out format
for Envir. Review
Comment requested

Geological Survey

US Dept of Interior

Helena

X

X

No Comment

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



STAN STEPHENS, GOVERNOR

COGSWELL BUILDING

STATE OF MONTANA

FAX # (406) 444-2606

HELENA, MONTANA 59620

(406) 444-3948

HKM Associates
Attn: David McCullough
Box 31318
Billings, MT 59107

Dear Dave:

The Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (DHES) has reviewed the Carter County Airport Board request to use federal funding to acquire land for a new airport at Ekalaka, MT.

The DHES had the following comments:

Air Quality

No long-term air quality impacts are expected due to the construction of a new airport. Some fugitive dust can be expected during the construction activity, but this can be controlled with water trucks, when necessary.

Solid Waste

All solid waste generated from the project must be disposed of in accordance with the Montana Solid Waste Management Act and its rules.

If you have any questions call: Warren Norton, Air Quality Bureau (444-3454), Jim Leiter, Solid and Hazardous Waste Bureau (444-2821) or me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Ellerhoff".
Tom Ellerhoff
Administrative Officer

cc: L. Lloyd
D. Cole, Department of Commerce



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 301 S. PARK, DRAWER 10096
HELENA, MONTANA 59626-0096

Ref: 8MO

APR 17 1989

April 14, 1989

David W. McCullough, P.E.
HKM Associates
Airport Industrial Park
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, Montana 59107

Re: Ekalaka, Carter County Montana
Airport Land Acquisition

Dear Mr. McCullough:

This is in response to your letter of March 24, 1989, which was received in our office on April 11, 1989. Enclosed is the copy of the Montana Intergovernmental Review Clearinghouse Form which you requested.

The information supplied in your letter is not sufficient to allow a determination of the potential environmental impacts from the above-referenced project. An environmental assessment (EA) should be provided which addresses all potential impacts from the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed facility, and from the closure of the existing facility. A complete description of environmental conditions at the existing and proposed sites should be provided. The EA should also address the following:

The actual and anticipated volume of air traffic.
The use, storage and disposal of pesticides, solvents,
deicer or other chemicals at both sites.
Dust and noise levels.
Planned mitigation of potential impacts.

If you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (406) 449-5486.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lee Shanklin", is written over a horizontal line.

Lee Shanklin
Environmental Scientist

Enclosure



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Fish and Wildlife Enhancement
Federal Bldg., U.S. Courthouse
301 South Park
P.O. Box 10023
Helena, Montana 59626

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWE-61130-Billings

March 28, 1989

David W. McCullough, P.E.
Senior Vice President
HKM Associates
Engineers/Planners
Airport Industrial Park
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, Montana 59107

RECEIVED

MAR 30 1989

HKM ASSOCIATES

Dear Mr. McCullough:

We have received your March 17, 1989, letter regarding the proposed construction of a new Carter County airport at Ekalaka, Montana. Your letter indicates that the Carter County Airport Board will seek funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for land acquisition for the new airport.

Your letter requests our comments concerning any known environmental issues in connection with the proposed airport project. In this regard the FAA, as the Federal funding agency in this case, must determine whether the proposed project may affect federally listed endangered or threatened species. If you or the FAA determine that such species may be affected, it will be necessary for the FAA to initiate formal consultation with us. The following information may aid you in that determination.

The federally listed endangered and threatened species which may occur within the general project area are the bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus), least tern (Sterna antillarum), piping plover (Charadrius melodus), and black-footed ferret (Mustela nigripes). Based on the nature of the proposed work and the location of the project, we do not expect any project related impacts to least terns or piping plovers.

We also foresee no substantive issues with the proposed project with regard to the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. However, if power powerlines are to be relocated as part of the project, we recommend that such lines be raptor-proofed following the techniques outlined in the Raptor Research Report No. 4, "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Powerlines - The State of the Art in 1981." A copy may be obtained for \$5.00 by writing to:

Jim Fitzpatrick, Treasurer
Raptor Research Foundation
Carpenter St. Croix Nature Center
12805 St. Croix Trail
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

Prairie dog (Cynomys spp.) towns are considered potential habitat for black-footed ferrets. If prairie dog towns are found to occur within the airport right-of-way, surveys for black-footed ferrets may need to be conducted and survey reports submitted to this office for review and concurrence within one year prior to disturbance to the towns. Please contact us for guidelines for conducting ferret surveys if you determine that prairie dog towns or ferrets may be effected by the proposed project.

We appreciate your effort to consider environmental concerns in connection with your project, including threatened and endangered species. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Gary Wood of my staff at (406) 657-6750.

Sincerely,



 Kemper McMaster
Acting State Supervisor
Montana State Office

cc: Suboffice Coordinator, USFWS, Billings, MT (FWE-61130-Billings)

JGW:cm:clh

**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

APR 14 1989

ASSOCIATE



Research and Technical
Services Bureau
FWP Building, MSU Campus
Bozeman, MT 59717-0001

April 14, 1989

Mr. David W. McCullough
HKM Associates
Engineers/Planners
Airport Industrial Park
PO Box 31318
Billings, MT 59107

Dear David,

I have reviewed the material you sent regarding the proposed airport at Ekalaka.

I concur with the FWS view regarding concerns over endangered species but feel that enough work has been done in that area to reach a "no effect" conclusion for black-footed ferrets and that raptor proofing any new powerlines would resolve any potential hazard to bald eagles or peregrine falcons.

Bald eagles occur in that area as a small local wintering population. This is unique because it is one of relatively few areas where we have wintering bald eagles utilizing a prey base of mainly jackrabbits. During migration, bald eagles pass through the area, but not in the large numbers we typically see on major rivers and lakes. If new powerlines are built to service the airport, the raptor proofing techniques referred to by FWS will be adequate to protect perched birds from electrocution. Beyond this, I can foresee no hazard to bald eagles from this project.

Peregrines occur as migrants in October and March-April. Most peregrines will move through quickly, but inclement weather may cause some birds to "hang around" for a few days. Again, raptor proofing power lines is the only precaution necessary. Construction activities and airport operation will have no effect on either the bald eagle or the peregrine.

Carter County was the location of the last (1978) confirmed sighting of a wild black-footed ferret in Montana. Consequently,

that area received more attention than any other area when we began our ferret searches and prairie dog inventories. That work was conducted from 1980-87, with the most intensive efforts in 1983 and 1984. No live ferrets were found. Our prairie dog inventory for Carter County is probably more complete and reliable than for most other counties in the state, and I feel it is still valid. We did not encounter prairie dogs in R57E or R58E in T2N or in R57E, R58E, or R59E in T1N. So, there is a substantial "clear zone" around the proposed airport. In my opinion, this equates to a "no effect" for ferrets.

The clearinghouse documents are usually referred to our regional offices. I note an April 22 deadline, and I assume the responsible people will take care of it within that timeframe. I don't usually handle those forms.

Sincerely,


Dennis L. Flath
Nongame Coordinator

DLF/mkm



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OMAHA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1612 U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-4978
April 18, 1989

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
c/o DNRC/CDD
1520 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-2301
(406)444-6670

APR 19 1989

ASSOCIATES

David McCullough, P.E.
HKM Associates
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, MT 59107

Dear Mr. McCullough:

Reference is made to your recent inquiry regarding Department of the Army permit requirements for the two proposed runways at the Ekalaka, Montana airport.

Based on the information provided and on a field inspection conducted by Larry Robson of our Billings Regulatory Office on April 14, 1989, no Department of the Army authorization is required for the proposed project provided no fill material is placed below the ordinary high water mark of Russell Creek or it's adjoining wetlands. Should the project be modified to include the placement of dredged or fill material into these waterways, some form of authorization may be required.

Although your project does not require Department of the Army authorization, this does not eliminate the requirement that other applicable federal, state, and local permits be obtained. Should you have any questions, please contact Larry Robson at (406) 657-6891. Thank you for contacting the Corps of Engineers.

Sincerely,

Robert E. McInerney
Montana Field Office Manager
Regulatory Branch
Operations Division

cf: Montana IGR Clearinghouse
Lt. Governor's Office, Room 210
State Capitol

Larry Robson



State Historic Preservation Office Montana Historical Society

Mailing Address: 225 North Roberts • Helena, MT 59620-9990

Office Address: 102 Broadway • Helena, MT • (406) 444-7715

April 6, 1989

David McCullough
HKM Associates
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, MT 59107

APR 10 1989
HKM ASSOCIATES

RE: Ekalaka Airport Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. McCullough:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our recommendations concerning the Ekalaka Airport project. In our previous letter we recommended that a cultural resource survey be conducted in the project area. We do not believe it is necessary to conduct a cultural resource survey before land acquisition and we would concur with an agreement to conduct the study at a later time prior to development. We do recommend that the survey be conducted enough in advance of construction so that there is still some flexibility in planning to consider significant properties, if present.

For your information I have enclosed a listing of cultural resource consultants in Montana. We look forward to further consultation.

Sincerely,



David Schwab
State Archaeologist

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
P. O. BOX 313
EKALAKA, MT 59324-0313
PHONE (406) 775-6355

March 17, 1989

MAR 21 1989

HKM Associates
David W. McCullough
P. O. Box 31318
Airport Industrial Park
Billings, MT 59107

HKM ASSOCIATES

Dear David,

I received your note and did some research. The average size operating unit in Carter County is approximately 7100 acres (this includes state and federal land).

Your questions on Hammeis and Speelmons units are as follows. (Both of these operating units include state and federal land.)

Hammeis - 3798 acres

Speelmons - 3640 acres of which 650 acres are adjacent to the proposed airport site.

If you have any other questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Wayne E. Yost

Wayne E. Yost, DC
Soil Conservation Service

SOILS LEGEND FOR CARTER COUNTY

*** ADVANCED COPY SUBJECT TO CHANGE ***

PRODUCER Airport siteLOCATION Ekalaka

DATE 03/30/89

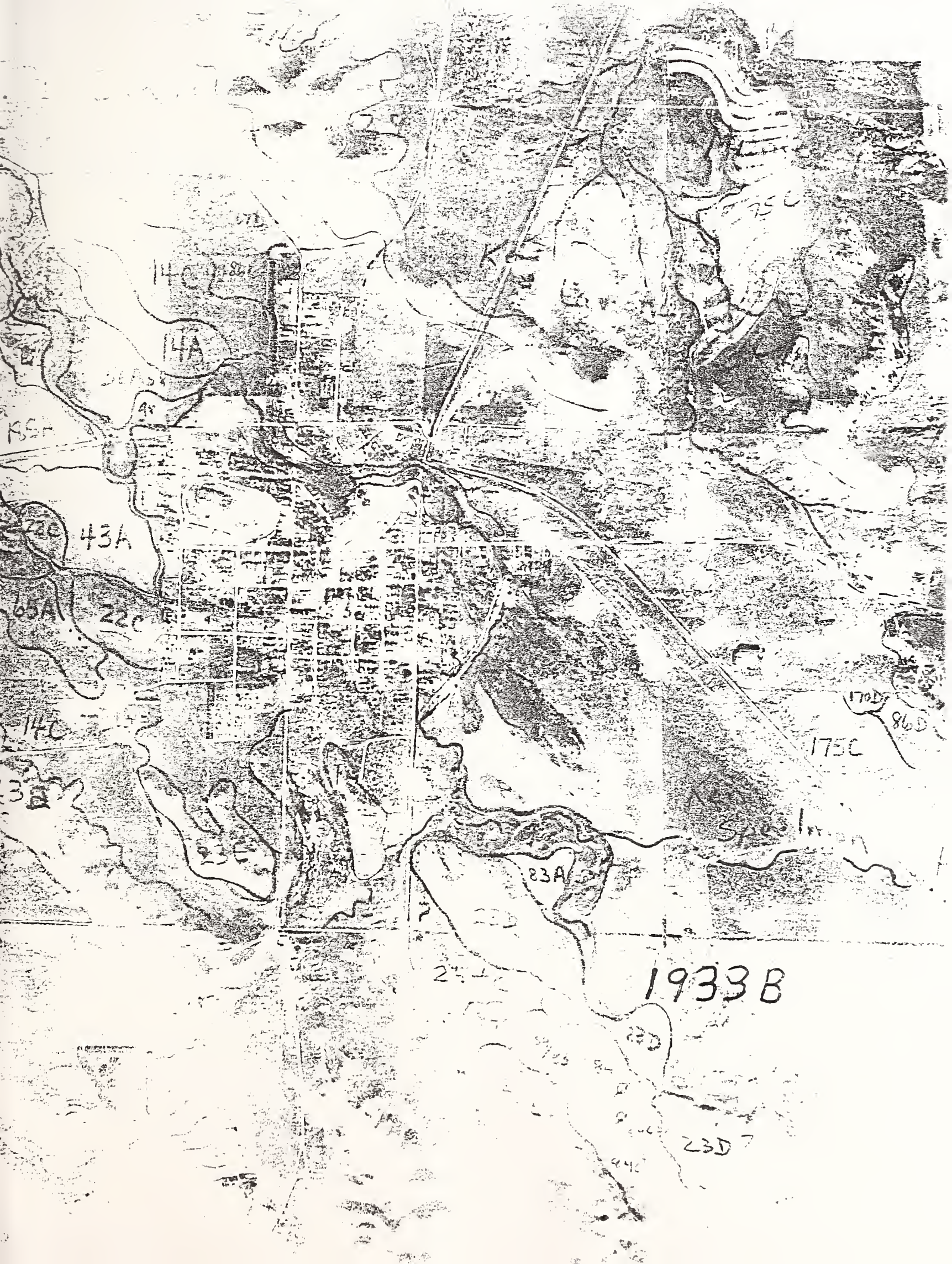
SOIL	NAME	TEXTURE	CP	SLOPE	LOC	R SITE	R PRODN	WE	XB	H	K	T	HEL	HYD	SOILS
-57A	Panola							6			.37	5		1	
-58D	Trimad	cl		4-15	4e	SuG	600-1200	6	3L	B	.61	3	Y		
-58E	Trimad	grl		15-35	6e	SuG	600-1200	5	3L	B	.20	3	Y		
-59C	Pring	sl		2-8	4e	Sy	1000-2000	3	2M	B	.20	5	Y		C00878
-63A	Chinook	sl		0-2	4e	Sy	1000-2000	3	2m	B	.20	5	Y		MT0065
-84C	Evanson	l		2-8	3e	Sl	1100-2200	6	1	B	.37	5	N		WY0280
254C	Creed	l	45	2-8	4e	Cp	800-1500	6	25	C	.43	5	N		MT0296
	Gerodum	cl	40		6e	Cp	500-1100	6	35	D	.43	5	N		MT0286

SU = SOIL MAPPING UNIT ; NAME = MAPPING UNIT NAME ; TEXTURE = SOIL TEXTURE ; CP = % COMPOSITION ; SLOPE = SLOPE OF LAND ;

LOC = LAND CAPABILITY CLASS ; R SITE = RANGE SITE ; R PRODN = RANGE PRODUCTION DRY WEIGHT ; WE = WIND ERODIBILITY GROUP ;

XB = WINDBREAK SUITABILITY GROUP ; H = HYDROLOGIC GROUP ; K = K FACTOR ; T = T VALUE ; HEL = HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND ;

HYD = HYBRID SOIL (1) SMC (2) INCLUSIONS ; SOILS = SOILS ID NUMBER



SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
P. O. BOX 313
EKALAKA, MT 59324-0313
PHONE (406) 775-6355

RECEIVED

MAR 31 1989

HKM Associates
P. O. Box 31318
Airport Industrial Park
Billings, MT 59107

HKM ASSOCIATES
March 30, 1989

RE: Proposed airport site A9

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you will find information on the soils for the airport site in Ekalaka.

A soil survey was completed on 3/29/89 and is enclosed with a soils legend. I would like to note a few things about the soil survey.

Evanston loam (84C) is a soil that is listed as IMPORTANT FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE. Which means it is dry or irrigated farmland that has a statewide importance for production of food, feed, forage and oilseed crops. Generally, this farmland includes those lands that are nearly prime and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce yields as high as prime farmland if conditions are favorable. This farmland has deep soils with slopes less than 10 percent and on which conservation practices are relatively easy to apply and can effectively control erosion. This farmland also has a capability class III or better.

The Evanston soil map where the runway is planned has some sodic spots so it would be a poorer grade of Evanston but still listed as IMPORTANT FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE.

Randslo loam (9A) is classified as a HYDRIC soil. A Hydric soils is a soil that in its undrained condition is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions that favor the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation. A hydric soils designation tells us that this area could very well be a wetland and further investigation is needed before anything is done to that site which might destroy the wetland if it exists.

If you have any other questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Wayne E Yost

Wayne E. Yost, DC
Soil Conservation Service

**MONTANA INTERGOVERNMENTAL
REVIEW CLEARINGHOUSE**

REVIEW AND COMMENT FORM

Applicant: HKM Associates
Carter County Airport Board Phone: 317-876-1155
ATTN: Mr. David W. McCullough, P.E.
Address: P.O. Box 31318, Billings, Montana 59107
Subject: Ekalaka, Carter County Montana Airport Land Acquisition
Clearinghouse SAI No. MT890322-477-X

YOUR COOPERATION IS REQUESTED IN COMPLETING YOUR REVIEW AND RETURNING
THIS FORM WITH YOUR COMMENTS TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS, WITH A COPY TO THE
CLEARINGHOUSE, NO LATER THAN April 22, 1989

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Is this proposal consistent with the plans, goals and objectives of your agency?	✓		
Does the proposed action conflict with any applicable statute, order, regulation or rule with which you are familiar?		✓	
Does this proposal overlap, conflict or duplicate other existing programs or agencies?		✓	

Describe any suggestions or means of improving or strengthening the proposed plan.

Please convey your general conclusion by checking the appropriate response(s).

- ☐ Proposal is supported.
☐ Support only with conditions described below.
☐ Non-supportive for the reasons described below.
☐ Additional information is desired as described below.
☒ No comment on this proposal.

REMARKS:

Reviewer: Wayne E. Yost Title: District Conservationist
Address: Box 313 Ekalaka MT 59334 Phone: 775-6355
Signature: Wayne E. Yost Date: 5-15-89

Return to Applicant listed above, with a copy to: Montana IGR Clearinghouse
Lt. Governor's Office, Room 210
State Capitol
Helena, Montana 59620

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Name Of Project Proposed Ekalaka Carter County Airport	Date Of Land Evaluation Request April 21, 1989
Proposed Land Use Airport	Federal Agency Involved Federal Aviation Administration
	County And State Carter County - Montana
	Date Request Received By SCS 5-1-89

PART II (To be completed by SCS)

Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form).		Yes ☒	No ☐	Acres Irrigated 0	Average Farm Size 7100
Major Crops/ GRAZING	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 0 % 0			Amount Of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 0 % 0	
Name Of Land Evaluation System Used Field Office Tech. Guide	Name Of Local Site Assessment System NONE			Date Land Evaluation Returned By SCS 5-15-89	

PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)

	Alternative Site Rating			
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	110			
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly	47			
C. Total Acres In Site	157			

PART IV (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Information

A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	0			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	38			
C. Percentage Of Farmland In County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0			
D. Percentage Of Farmland In Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	0			

PART V (To be completed by SCS) Land Evaluation Criterion

Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)

Site Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b))	Maximum Points			
1. Area In Nonurban Use	15	15		
2. Perimeter In Nonurban Use	10	8		
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed	20	0		
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0		
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	15	5		
6. Distance To Urban Support Services	15	10		
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	1		
8. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	10	0		
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5		
10. On-Farm Investments	20	15		
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	10	0		
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	0		
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	59		

PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	0		
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	59		
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)	260	59		

Site Selected: Site A9	Date Of Selection 6/1/89	Was A Local Site Assessment Used? Yes ☐ No ☐
-------------------------------	---------------------------------	---

Reason For Selection: **Only Site A9**

of all new sites can be obtained without condemnation. For this and other reasons spelled out in "AIRPORT SITE SELECTION STUDY" by HKM Associates, December 1988, Site A9 is the "selected site".

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.



MONTANA 34 CARTER
PHONES
OFFICE 775-8762
MANAGER 775-8761

BOX 368
EKALAKA, MONTANA
59324



MAY 8 1989

May 4, 1989

RE: ASSOCIATE

Mr. David McCullough, P.E.
HKM Associates
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, Montana 59107

Dear Mr. McCullough:

RE: Carter County Airport Project

In reference to our conversation on furnishing you with a document to use for the Environmental Assessment of the above project, I will state the following:

Southeast Electric Cooperative Inc. is the supplying utility where the proposed project is being planned. The cooperative does have adequate power to serve the proposed project which will be billed on the basis of the standard extension policy.

Cooperative personnel will be available to work with the design people to accomodate any concern which may arise as the project develops. It does not appear at the onset that there will be any major problems.

The cooperative has adequate facilities and serving the project would not create any burden to the other members of the Cooperative.

I trust the preceeding statements will be adequate for the Evironmental Assessment process, but should you need anything further do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Vernon Emery

Vernon Emery, Manager

APPENDIX C

AIRPORT PLANS

APPENDIX D

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
AND PUBLIC HEARING

RESUME
OF THE
JULY 17, 1989
PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE
EKALAKA AIRPORT
DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared and Submitted by:

HKM ASSOCIATES
P.O. Box 31318
Billings, MT 59107
Phone: (406) 245-6354

July 21, 1989
2M090.102/WPTRANS1392

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I

- a) Legal Notice of Public Hearing
- b) Hearing Roster of Attendance
- c) Transcript of Public Hearing

Section II

- d) News article concerning the Public Hearing.

Friday, July 14, 1989 Article in the Ekalaka
Eagle - Official Paper of Carter County and
Town of Ekalaka

PUBLIC HEARING
EKALAKA AIRPORT,
CARTER COUNTY, MONTANA

Pursuant to Section 509(b)(6) of the Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, notice is hereby given that Carter County, Montana intends to apply to the Federal Aviation Administration for Federal funds to buy approximately 178 acres of land and to construct an all new airport in Sections 4 and 5, T1N, R58E, MPM and Section 32, T2N, R58E, MPM to include:

1. Grade, gravel and pave a 4800'x60' runway, aircraft parking ramp and associated taxiways.
2. Grade a 2500' x120' turf crosswind land strip.
3. Construct a medium intensity runway lighting system and PAPI on Runway 13.
4. Construct fence, gravel access road and miscellaneous drainage improvements.

The Carter County Board of Commissioners will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering the economic, social and environmental effects of this land acquisition and airport construction and its consistency with the goals and objectives of any planning which may have been carried out by the County.

The Public Hearing shall be held **July 17, 1989 at the Carter County Courthouse at 2:00 p.m. M.D.T.**

Copies of the County's Environmental Assessment are available for public examination at the Ekalaka Town Office, Office of the County Clerk and Recorder and in the Town Library.

Written comments will be accepted prior to and at the Hearing.

By the order of the Board of County Commissioners, the **13** day of **June**, 1989.

BY /s/
Joseph Padden, Chairman

PUBLIC HEARING
EKALAKA AIRPORT,
CARTER COUNTY, MONTANA

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Copies of the County's Environmental Assessment are available for public examination at the Ekalaka Town Office, Office of the County Clerk and Recorder and in the Town Library.

Written comments will be accepted prior to and at the Hearing.

By the order of the Board of County Commissioners, the 13 day of June, 1989.

BY /s/

Joseph Padden, Chairman

Published in The Ekalaka Eagle, Ekalaka, MT on June 16, 23 and 30, 1989.

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MONTANA } ss.
County of Carter

Erice Lambert

being first duly

sworn, says:

That I am the Publisher of THE EKALAKA EAGLE, which is a legal weekly newspaper of general circulation printed and published at Ekalaka, Carter County, Montana.

I do solemnly swear that the notice of which a true copy is hereto attached, was published in the regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not

in any supplement thereof, for 3

consecutive issues, the first publication being on

the 16th day of June, 1989

and the last publication being on the 30th

day of June, 1989

Erice Lambert

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th

day of July, 1989

Michael J. Quale

NOTARY PUBLIC for the State of Montana

Residing at Ekalaka, Montana

My Commission Expires January 22, 1991



ROSTER OF ATTENDANCE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING
ON
PROPOSED EKALAKA AIRPORT
CARTER COUNTY, MONTANA
JULY 17, 1989 AT 2:00 P.M. AT COURT HOUSE
EKALAKA, MT.

NAMES - 1member/ family may sign	ADDRESS - (for mail purposes only)	COUNTY RESIDENT/ AND/OR TAXPAYER	OFFICIAL CAPACITY
Dave McCulloch	P.O. Box 31318 Billings, MT 59101		Projects Engr.
Joseph Padden	mt 88. Camp Creek, S.D 57224		Co. Commissioner
Thomas O. Lambert	Box 346 Hammock, Wyo 59332		County Commissioner
Milton T. Markson	Ekalaka mt. 59324		County Comm.
Bruce Lambert	Box 66 Ekalaka, MT 59324		Airport Board
Eileen Lind	Ekalaka		" "
Eddie Wilson	Ekalaka		
Art Wilson	Ekalaka		
Regene Speelman	Mill Iron mt		
Thermit Speelman	Mill Iron mt.		
Debra Hammel	Ekalaka		
Richard Hammel	Ekalaka		
Karen Hammel	Ekalaka, mt.		
Carol Carey	Ekalaka		
Margaret S. Munro	Ekalaka		
Henry Skyles	Ekalaka		
Paul Jones	Ekalaka		
Marvin Erickson	Ekalaka		
Linda Zittlen	Ekalaka		
Judy St	Ekalaka		
Al Stier	Ekalaka		
Ernest Tache	Ekalaka		Airport Board
Amelia Castiberry	Ekalaka		Clerk & Recorder

EKALAKA AIRPORT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC HEARING
JULY 17, 1989
HELD IN
COUNTY COURTHOUSE AT EKALAKA, MONTANA

The hearing was convened at 2:00 PM MDT by chairman Joseph Padden of the Carter County Commissioners. The other two commissioners, Norman Lambert and Milton Markuson and the three airport board members in attendance, Earnie Tooke, Erlend Laird and Brice Lambert, were introduced. It was noted that Greg Tooke and Leon Brazler are also airport board members who were not able to be in attendance.

Dave McCullough the project's engineer was then introduced (hereinafter in this resume this engineer is identified as DMC).

DMC began by giving a short history of the project and a discussion of why the existing airport could not qualify for FAA grant funds to construct a longer runway with a paved surface. An all new airport site had to be found. The site selection process was then discussed. A map showing the other eight sites studied was shown. Site A3 and A8 were identified as sites given the greatest amount of study and which would qualify for FAA fund participation. However, neither Site A3 or A8 could be obtained without condemnation. DMC further stated that this led to a further search and the selection of Site A9 which is the site now proposed for the new airport.

The ALP (Airport Layout Plan) was used to show the features of the proposed new airport. The primary runway, designated 13/31, was pointed out as a 4800' x 60' runway to be paved in the initial project. Also identified was the location of a cross-wind landing strip, designated 18/36, which is proposed for turf (only) construction in the initial project. It was

pointed out that 18/36 was so sited that it could eventually be extended northerly across Russell Creek for an ultimate length of 3700 feet.

A color scheme was called out to identify features which are proposed for inclusion in the initial project. Features identified as those appearing feasible for a future addition to the initial improvements were identified by a second color. Finally the color used to show features which probably are not feasible for the foreseeable future was highlighted. It was pointed out these very distant items were shown and considered for the purpose of insuring they would fit into the master plan if they ever became necessary.

With this introduction, the environmental hearing was formally begun with the reading by the County Clerk of the purpose and scope of the hearing.

The following is a verbatim rendition of what the Clerk read which is identical to the published advertisement of the hearing with certain additions which are set out by the underlined words.

"Pursuant to Section 509(b)(6) of the Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, notice is hereby given that Carter County, Montana intends to apply to the Federal Aviation Administration for Federal funds to buy approximately 178 acres of land and to construct an all new airport in Sections 4 and 5, T1N, R58E, MPM and Section 32, T2N, R58E, MPM to include but not necessarily limited to:

1. Grade, gravel and pave a 4800'x60' runway, aircraft parking ramp or ramps and associated taxiways.

2. Grade a 2500'x120' turf crosswind land strip and modify drainage in this area to the satisfaction of the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army.
3. Construct a medium intensity runway lighting system and PAPI (a light beam system to assist the pilot of an approaching plane to stay on a safe approach slope and on centerline) on Runway 13.
4. Construct fence, gravel access road and miscellaneous drainage improvements.

The Carter County Board of Commissioners are conducting this Public Hearing for the purpose of considering the economic, social and environmental effects of this land acquisition and airport construction and its consistency with the goals and objectives of any planning which may have been carried out the County or which may be judged necessary as the project materializes."

DMC then stated that since the full draft of the Environmental Assessment has been a matter of public record in Ekalaka for more than thirty days (a copy was placed as advertised in the County Clerk and Recorder's office, in Town Hall and in the public library) he would not go into detailed discussion of every item in the assessment as published.

However, DMC stated that there are two items which should be identified and briefly discussed.

(1) The initial improvements as proposed would require the removal of all farm buildings on the Speelmon's farmstead (site was pointed out on the ALP) except the residence. This residence is so close to the runway that it would be less than a desirable place to live and thus its removal is also proposed. The Speelmon's now have this residence rented to a

family of three who, while not connected with the Speelmon's farm operation, live in this house. DM^C pointed out that under the FAA airport construction program such "displaced persons" have certain rights and privileges which are provided to mitigate the loss of their rental unit. The U.S. Department of Transportation booklet "Your Rights and Benefits as a Displacee Under the Federal Relocation Assistance Program" was displayed. DM^C stated that the County intended to advise this family of their rights and privileges and to fully comply with the intent of this D.O.T. provision.

(2) DM^C stated that in the preparation of the draft Environmental Assessment, EPA had expressed their concern that, among other environmental considerations, the handling of agricultural chemicals, used by crop sprayers as pesticides and herbicides, must receive careful consideration; both at the existing airport to be abandoned and in the construction of the new airport. DM^C further stated that it is the County's intention to fully comply with all EPA, Montana Department of Agriculture and the State Hazardous and Solid Waste Bureau requirements, both at the old airport being abandon and in the construction of the new facility.

DM^C stated that the County wants to consider a facility on the new airport which can not only be used by crop sprayers flying off the new airport but by the County in their weed control program. The County Commissioners stated they want to relocate their present weed control facilities from the center of town and that they want to consider a facility like that now in use on the Three Forks, Montana airport. DM^C stated the new facility would likely involve an apron so constructed that any chemical liquid falling on the surface would be confined to the apron by a curb effect. The apron would slope to drain to a tank or tanks where the waste liquid could be contained until pumped off into a conveyance unit, perhaps a crop sprayer plane, and thence used in spraying as with new chemicals.

DMC offered the assurance that the agricultural chemical handling element of the new airport project would have its plans approved by EPA, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Hazardous and Solids Waste Bureau as well as FAA.

DMC noted that the site proposed for this agricultural chemical handling facility is shown on the ALP at the runway 31 or southerly end of runway 13/31. This places it at the opposite end of new runway from the general aviation building area and parking ramp facilities. DMC asked for statements, pro or con, as to the south end location versus placing this crop sprayer facility at the north end of the runway with other building facilities. No comment or preference was offered from the audience.

With this emphasis on these two items DMC called for questions and comments from the audience. Mr. Kenneth Speelmon (the owner of a portion of the land to be purchased) came forward to look at the ALP location of the crop sprayer apron. DMC pointed it out as being on the easterly side of the runway and not less than 300' from runway centerline. It will have a taxiway from the apron to the runway.

Speelmon further asked where the new airport property fence would be located at the southerly end of the runway. He did not understand that the fan shaped pattern of the runway 31 clear zone was not property to be acquired in fee. It rather was an area over which the County needed an easement (only) for the overflight of planes approaching the runway. It would not be fenced in with the airport. DMC then pointed out the location of the east/west property line relative to the 31 end of runway. He explained that it had to be about 700 feet from the end of the runway for approach surface clearance over the private road. This road will be provided for Speelmon to cross the projected runway centerline for access to his cropland west of the runway. Mrs. Harriet Speelmon indicated that they

gained the impression from survey stakes several months ago that the runway would not get into their building area and cropland. DM^C explained that at that stage of planning a 3800 foot runway was anticipated. When it was learned that more than a 3800 foot runway was needed to provide for ambulance planes, the survey stakes were placed in the cropland and farm building area to allow planning for a 4800 foot runway. DM^C further explained that since more than 3800 feet of runway was needed, FAA will require the initial project to be to a full 4800 foot in length. They do not want to see a runway at a length anywhere between 3800 feet and 4800 feet. It should be either 3800 feet or 4800 feet.

Mrs. Speelmon further stated that there was a good well at the residence. Since the Speelmon's will loose the use of this well when the building site is acquired by the County she implied that the land acquisition arrangement should address this loss. After the hearing the Airport Board discussed this need and talked about drilling a new well at a location chosen by the Speelmon's.

Mrs. Speelmon stated that when Mr. Penfield, the County's appraiser, called at the rented residence to appraise the house a discussion of the plan for the new airport construction quite naturally occurred. Penfield pointed out to the Speelmon's renter that the proximity of the runway to the residence probably made the house a less than desirable place to live and that somewhere down the line the County would be approaching them about an arrangement to provide for their relocation. DM^C stated that until negotiations were successfully conducted with the Speelmon's to buy the land involved it was premature to discuss the County's responsibilities to the renters. However, DM^C stated that he would appreciate Mrs. Speelmon giving her renters a copy of the above referenced FAA "Rights and Benefits as a Displacee" brochure (handed to her at this point) and to

offer assurance that the County fully intended to comply with this FAA procedure. Mrs. Speelman stated that there is no problem. It is believed that she went away from the hearing with the feeling that everything could be worked out to everyone's satisfaction.

DMC asked for further statements of an environmental nature. Mr. Alfred L. Stieg, who owns the fuel bulk plant adjacent to the westerly side of the 13 end of runway, asked whether FAA criteria allowed a runway to be constructed with an approach in this proximity to an above ground fuel storage facility. DMC stated that while everyone wishes the fuel storage facility was not there, it's proximity to the runway centerline does not violate FAA criteria. The elevation of the 13 end of runway is such that the approach surface clears all bulk plant tanks and other structures. The elevation of Stieg's property is below the approach surface by more than 50 vertical feet. Thus the County does not need to obtain a clear zone easement to fly over the Stieg property. Mr. Stieg asked if, recognizing that the proximity of the above ground fuel tanks to the runway 13 approach is less than desirable, could the County and the FAA justify paying to relocate the bulk plant. DMC replied that since no part of the plant violates the FAA approach surface criteria, FAA could not participate in such a relocation.

At this point DMC asked several times for any other questions or statements. No response was received from the audience. DMC then recommended to the County Commissioners that they declare the hearing concluded. They then concluded the hearing with an expression of appreciation for the attendance and participation of all attendees.

Public hearing on new airport set for July 17

A public hearing on the proposed new airport at Ekalaka has been set for July 17 in Ekalaka. The meeting is set for 2:00 p.m. at the courthouse in Ekalaka, and is being held for the purpose of obtaining public comment on the new airport project.

The hearing is required since Carter County plans to apply to the Federal Aviation Administration for federal funds to purchase land and construct the new facility.

Currently plans call for purchase of 178 acres of land approximately one mile southwest of the present airport. The new facility will consist of a lighted paved runway up to 4,800 feet long and 60 feet wide, along with a 2,500 feet turf crosswind runway and associated parking area and taxiways. The present runway is 3,000 feet long by 75 feet wide, is graveled and has lights.

The Carter County Airport

Board proposed building a new airport after the FAA would not approve federal funds for upgrading the present facility, and after engineering estimates suggested that the cost of paving the current runway would exceed available airport funds.

The major reason, the board feels, for a major upgrading of current airport situation is to provide a facility that will accommodate ambulance aircraft.

Ambulance services operating from Billings and Rapid City use aircraft that travel from 200 to 350 mph and require paved runways that are longer than the current 3,000 feet. Typically these aircraft accommodate one or two patients and are heavily loaded with emergency equipment and medical personnel. Ambulance operators are reluctant to use gravel runways due to the possibility of propeller and tire damage, and like to

have about 4,000 feet available for takeoff.

Presently, patients who must be transported by air ambulance to large hospitals meet the ambulance aircraft at Baker. However, ambulance planes such as operated by Deaconess or St. Vincent medical centers in Billings could reach Ekalaka in 30 minutes if they had the facilities to land.

Additionally, these operators usually do not use ambulance helicopters to travel the long distances to Ekalaka, since helicopters travel at about 120 mph and may not be able to carry enough fuel to make the round trip.

On the question of funding, Carter County has accumulated approximately \$120,000 in the airport fund since 1981 when the county began to assess a 2 mill levy for maintenance and upgrading of the airport. The 2

mill levy in the maximum levy allowed for airports.

If the FAA approves the use of federal dollars, the agency will fund the project on a nine-to-one basis. At present, the FAA has approved the proposed site for federal funds, but the county must first purchase the land required. Once the land is in county hands, the FAA can release federal money for the project to cover land purchase, engineering costs and construction.

Normally projects of this kind follow a step-by-step process where first land is surveyed, then appraised, environmental studies done, and finally land purchased.

However, in the case of the Ekalaka airport, in order to have the land purchased by August to qualify the project for the next federal fiscal year which begins September 1, all of these steps have had to be done con-

currently.

In addition to the 2 mills paid by county taxpayers, the federal nine-to-one matching contribution is funded through an airport trust fund. The federal funds derive from the use of the air system, through taxes on aviation fuel, airline tickets and other sources associated with aviation.

The land required for the airport project is presently held by two landowners, Hammel Ranch, and Ken and Harriet Speelman. Negotiations have not yet begun, but the appraisal process required by the FAA is nearing completion.

The land occupied by the current airport can be available for trading purposes which has the advantage of preserving more of the county contribution for federal matching funds and removing fewer acres ultimately from the county tax rolls.

As the airport plan has devel-

oped, the facility has seen some embellishment. Initially the crosswind runway was not considered, but has now been offered to provide a safer alternative for light plane pilots landing when the wind is not aligned with the main paved runway.

Another suggestion has been to provide an area at the opposite end of the runway from the main parking area for use by spray aircraft to help contain and isolate dangerous chemicals. This plan was developed in response to environmental concerns and has received the endorsement of county commissioners who feel that the county's weed spraying facilities could also be located there. This would completely remove county week spraying activities from downtown Ekalaka where weed spraying equipment is now located.

DATE	WEATHER		
	MAX	MIN	PREC
July 5	102	55	
July 6	91	59	.05"
July 7	96	65	
July 8	104	58	
July 9	100	61	
July 10	81	55	.27"
July 11	88	56	



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